

*The Japanese Treaty
and A Free Asia*



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What is the significance of the peace treaty now being offered at San Francisco for acceptance by the Allied Powers and Japan? There have been many opinions expressed. There has been loud denunciation. There have been clear affirmations. Let us look at the record.

On *December Seventh*, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Government culminated ten years of aggression and rapine in Asia with a brutal and unprovoked assault upon the Philippine Islands and Hawaii. It followed this with a savage drive for military domination of Asia which carried blood and fire from the lonely islands off Alaska to the borders of India. No country of Asia and no western country with an outpost in Asia escaped the bitter weight of occupation or the dark threat thereof, not even Russia.

Four years later, the flood tide of aggression had been rolled back to the shores of Japan itself, rolled back by the heroic and united efforts of those men and women, of all races and all nations, East and West, who believed in national independence and the right to live in peace according to their own free choice.

Russia was not amongst those who won the war in the Pacific. There are no Russian graves in the jungles of New Guinea, on the bloody ridges of Guadalcanal. The blood that soaked the dry earth of China, the sands of Iwo Jima—that colored the waters of the Salween—came from many veins, but none of Russia.

Victory in the Pacific had one immediate and significant result. It established Asia's claims to independence and equality. Inspired by a victory they had so significantly contributed to, the peoples of Asia asserted their right to recognition and to the ordering of their own affairs. Though the translation of that right into fact has not yet become complete and the period of travail is not yet over, the record of accomplishment is good. India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, the Philippine Republic and Korea became sovereign states and Indo-China is approaching an equivalent status, delayed in its implementation only by the bitter mistaken opposition of the Viet Minh.

In Japan, the United States set about sternly but with mercy to achieve for the Japanese people what they themselves had been unable to accomplish. In five years of occupation, Japan has been given the foundations of a stable government responsible to the people themselves under a constitution which guarantees to the people a rule of law and the enjoyment of basic freedoms. The extent to which these guarantees and that responsibility become reality will depend upon the courage and deter-

mination of the Japanese people themselves, but the opportunity is theirs. The economy of Japan has been restored because no people can live in want and fear and because a satisfied people become a free people.

JAPAN is offered a generous peace because she has earned such a peace. The Japanese Peace Treaty is clear and irrefutable proof of the intentions of the free West toward the East. It is the next logical step in the long, slow sequence of events by which country after country has found its freedom and been admitted to international equality.

The United Nations will admit to its council chambers those nations which have proved their right to be recognized as free and responsible states and which will defend their freedom against all challengers. But the right to be free entails the co-equal responsibility to act with justice and restraint both towards the people within one's borders and all people without.

Restoring sovereignty to Japan represents a forward step toward world peace. The men who took Japan to war were not the freely chosen representatives of the Japanese people, but a selfish few who had arrogantly asserted their right to rule the destinies of millions within and without Japan. They are no more, and the power of controlling any future assertion of a similar right rests in the hands of the Japanese people. If the Japanese people would remain free, they must control this power.

How best may Asia protect itself against the possibility, yet remote, of future Japanese aggression? A false leader has arisen to "defend" the Asian nations. Dare Asia accept the counsel of a country which failed to come to its defense during the long months and years when Japanese aggression was a fact; a country which was, indeed, allied with the aggressor in a pact of friendship?

The country which waited six days before Japan's defeat to take sides with the united forces of Asia and the West has scant claim to Asia's faith. Protection for the Asian peoples does exist; but it exists only in the United Nations—which has proved itself in the defense of Korean freedom—and in its own instruments of collective security.

Who threatens war? From whence comes talk of dangers, of aggression? Who is now engaged in aggression against free states and the United Nations?

First, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which took no part in the Pacific War other than to enter it six days before Japan surrendered and six months after Japan had sought their aid in surrendering; which has not yet restored the prisoners who gave themselves up;

which has consistently refused to negotiate in a peaceful and honorable manner; which quickly seized and now solely retains the northern islands of Japan; which permits no free movement between these islands and the homeland; and which abruptly and conclusively broke off negotiations looking toward the drafting of a treaty. The USSR which now proclaims its friendship for the Japanese people and at the same time its opposition to restoration of their independence.

Second, the Peoples Republic of China, which has not yet established its right to recognition as a responsible government in stable control of its own people, which is now engaged in supporting the disastrous North Korean attempt at armed aggression against the Republic of Korea; which has threatened the security of every Southeast Asian country through its intrigues, its covert support of guerilla movements and its menacing talk; which has launched an armed invasion of Tibet—the Peoples' Republic of China which goes even further and threatens war if the treaty is signed.

Only the U. S. S. R. and the Peoples' Republic of China threaten war and wage aggression. Is this a mark of friendship? Is this an indication of a desire for peace?

The signing of a treaty of peace with Japan is a landmark in Asian history. It marks the defeat of an aggression so brutal that it left little of Asia untouched. It marks the triumph of a subject people over a militaristic and imperialistic clique and their entrance into the family of free and democratic nations. But most significant of all: it marks the conclusion of a war through which the peoples of Asia came to know their own strength and purpose and through which they asserted, and have largely achieved, their right to national independence and freedom.